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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5127th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 February 2005, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Small arms", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of his recommendations to the Council entitled 'Small Arms' (S/2005/69) of 7 February 2005, and reaffirms the statements of its President of 19 January 2004 (S/PRST/2004/1), of 31 October 2002 (S/PRST/2002/30), and of 31 August 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21), and of 24 September 1999 (S/PRST/1999/28).

"The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, the Security Council recognizes that the dissemination of illicit small arms and light weapons has hampered the peaceful settlement of disputes, fuelled such disputes into armed conflicts and contributed to the prolongation of such armed conflicts. The Council reaffirms the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and, subject to the Charter, the right of each State to import, produce and retain small arms and light weapons for its self-defence and security needs.

"The Council encourages the arms-exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in small arms and light weapons transactions according to their existing responsibilities under relevant international law. It also encourages international and regional cooperation in identifying the origin and transfer of small arms and light weapons in order to prevent their diversion, in particular, to Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. The Council welcomes the significant steps that have been taken by Member States and international and regional organizations in this regard. The obligation of Member States to enforce the arms embargo should be coupled with enhanced international and regional cooperation concerning arms exports. The Council encourages Members to undertake vigorous actions aimed at restricting the supply of small arms, light weapons and ammunitions to areas of instability.

"The Security Council takes note that the United Nations Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

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and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be held July 2005 and encourages Member States to fully cooperate with the Chair of the Meeting to have a successful outcome.

"The Security Council notes with appreciation that regional actions on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects have been strengthened in recent years, and encourages the continuation of assistance at national, regional and international levels that would fit the needs of Member States to implement the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action adopted by the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

"The Council welcomes the ongoing efforts by open-ended working group established by resolution 58/241 of 23 December 2003 of the General Assembly to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons and calls upon all Member States to support all efforts aimed at this purpose. It expresses the wish that the ongoing work within the group will lead to a positive conclusion at its third session as scheduled.

"The Security Council welcomes the adoption of resolution 59/86 of 10 December 2004 of the General Assembly by which, among other things, it requested the Secretary-General to continue broad-based consultations on further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons with a view to establishing a Group of Governmental Experts to consider the issue.

"The Security Council welcomes the inclusion of Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) on an exceptional basis in the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms.

"The Security Council further encourages Member States that have not already done so to establish the necessary legislative or other measures, including the use of authenticated end-user certificates, to ensure effective control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons.

"The Security Council renews the support given to the plan of ECOWAS to strengthen the moratorium signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998 on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, and to replace it with a mandatory convention. It welcomes the decision by the European Council on 2 December 2004 to significantly support this initiative and calls upon all States and organizations in a position to do so to support this endeavour.

"The Council calls upon all Member States to enforce all Security Council resolutions on sanctions, including those imposing arms embargoes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and to bring their own domestic implementation into compliance with the Council's measures on sanctions. The Council calls upon all Member States to continue to make available to the Sanctions Committees all pertinent information on any alleged violations of arms embargoes and to take appropriate measures to investigate such allegations. The Council urges Member States in a position to do so to provide assistance to interested States in strengthening their capacity to fulfil their obligations in this regard.

"The Security Council underlines the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be addressed together with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in the post-conflict phases. The Council recognizes that DDR is closely linked with the long-term peace and security in a post-conflict situation and recalls that a growing number of peacekeeping missions contain the DDR element as part of their mandate. In this regard, the Council stresses the importance of a comprehensive international and regional approach to DDR that is not limited to the political and security aspects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, but addresses also its social and economic aspects, including special needs of child soldiers and women.

"The Security Council, while bearing in mind that the issue of the illicit small arms and light weapons has a multidisciplinary nature, encourages Member States, in a position to do so, to provide assistance and support to the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism.

"The Council continues to recognize the need to engage the relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations, business and financial institutions and other actors at the international, regional and local levels to contribute to the implementation of arms embargoes and contribute to the wider objective of preventing illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to update the Council on 28 February 2006 for its earliest possible consideration of the implementation of all the recommendations contained in his report entitled 'Small arms' of 20 September 2002 (S/2002/1053)."